

Status of the Claims

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9-12, and 14-18 are pending in this application.

Claims 3 and 4 have been cancelled, without prejudice.

Claims 1, 5, 6, and 10 have been amended. Support for these amendments can be found throughout the specification, claims, and drawings, as originally filed.

REMARKS

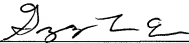
In the Examiner's Answer mailed on September 6, 2006, it was indicated that claims 15-18 are now allowable. *See Examiner's Answer pages 2-3.* On February 7, 2008, Applicant's representative, Gregory Ozga, contacted Examiner Cervetti to discuss these allowed claims and to determine what features of claims 1-14 would need to be changed in order to overcome the rejection. Examiner Cervetti indicated that independent claims 1 and 10 are rejected because they recite the language "predetermined number of steps" without providing more information. Examiner Cervetti further indicated that if claims 1 and 10 were amended to include each of the elements set forth in claim 15, then this would overcome the rejections present in the case, and provided that a follow-up search turned up no new art, the case would be in allowable form. On February 11, 2008, Applicant filed a Request for Continued Examination and now Applicant submits a Preliminary Amendment which amends the claims as suggested by the Examiner during the February 7, 2008 interview. Applicant requests entry of and reconsideration of the claims in light of the amendments made herein.

Furthermore, Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance of which allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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